



# City of Hampton, VA

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
[www.hampton.gov](http://www.hampton.gov)

*Linda Curtis*  
*W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr.*  
*Will Moffett*  
*Chris Snead*  
*Christopher G. Stuart*  
*Donnie R. Tuck*  
*George E. Wallace, Mayor*

*Staff:*  
*Mary Bunting, City Manager*  
*Jeff Sachs, City Attorney*  
*Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council*

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Wednesday, February 12, 2014      6:11 PM      Council Chambers, 8th Floor, City Hall

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### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

### **GEORGE E. WALLACE PRESIDED**

**PRESENT:** Linda Curtis, W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr., Will Moffett, Chris Snead, Christopher G. Stuart, Donnie R. Tuck

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Tammy Lee, Deputy Clerk of Council, read the protocol for the Public Comment Session.

Mayor Wallace noted that there is a group of special guests tonight and asked the first two speakers to allow the special guests to speak first. As both Mr. Deerfield and Ms. Charles agreed, Mayor Wallace called the special guests forward.

Councilman Moffett introduced Ms. Michelle Simpson, founder of Inspiring Minds Youth Development Center. He stated that the program is phenomenal and that his daughter was part of the first Inspiring Minds group, who have now all graduated college and are doing well. He noted that the group will soon have its first doctor as a graduate of the program. He stated that Ms. Simpson was National USA Neighborhoods' National Advocate of the Year several years ago. He stated that the young people that have come through the program speak volumes for the leadership of Ms. Simpson and her team, and the parents that have been supportive over the years.

Ms. Simpson thanked the City for the opportunity for her children to come before Council to be celebrated and recognized. She stated that she was not here to promote or recognize herself, but the children. Inspiring Minds is a before and after school homework tutorial center that brings kids to and from school. The goal is to help parents who have to work outside the home to go home and spend time with their families eating dinner, going to children's activities like soccer or choir, and generally spending quality time at home. During the first interim, three children had straight A's and Ms. Simpson asked those students to stand and be recognized. She noted that two of these students were males, working against the statistics for males. The majority of the students were

AB Honor Roll students, with only one C out of 21 kids in the program. She asked those students to stand and be recognized.

Ms. Simpson noted that the group had originally planned to be here three weeks ago, but had been snowed out. Since that time, second interim report cards have been issued and the same children have straight A's and are on the AB Honor Roll. In addition, three children at Tucker Capps Elementary School received the Tucker Capps Top Cat Award. She asked those students to stand and be recognized for their perfect attendance at school. She stated that the majority of those in the program have been awarded and celebrated on more than one occasion at their school because they are top citizens. She stated that these students represent the reason behind the school.

Ms. Simpson stated that she is a small business owner struggling like everybody else, but she doesn't look at it as a struggle because of the support of her staff. One is a senior at Hampton University studying political science. One has been with her for over the six years. One is a retired employee from the City of Hampton and the bus driver who makes sure that the students arrive to and from the center safely. She asked the parents to stand and be recognized, noting that none of her staff would be there without the parents entrusting their students in her staff's care.

Ms. Simpson noted that the program has four students who are not old enough to go to public school because their birthdays are late. She promised the kids and parents that when the preschool site on Big Bethel Road closed down she would prepare them for kindergarten. The four young men are able to read and are all prepared now to enter into kindergarten in September.

Ms. Simpson shared the motto at Inspiring Minds: If they can think it, they can do it, if it's available for them to get there, we're going to go. She stated that she believes in exposing them to opportunities, including a full-fledged summer camp. She thanked Vice Mayor Curtis who, as the Commonwealth's Attorney, invited the children to the courthouse to listen to dockets. She would then take the children to her office and allow them to ask her questions.

Ms. Simpson noted that Councilman Moffett is the reason she was still here. In 1997, she was a corporate manager for Federal Express and quit to be home with her children. This was how Councilman Moffett's daughter and her two daughters started the program. One of her daughters teaches in the Hampton City Schools system and the other has been selected by Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center (MCV) to study medicine in Italy her senior year to be an obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) doctor. She stated that her son is now studying at Auburn University, getting a second Masters in Architectural Construction after graduating from Hampton University in May.

Ms. Simpson stated that it is because Hampton allows her the opportunity to run her center that the parents are entrusting their children to the program. She thanked Council again and recognized her husband, who supports her in her efforts. She asked if there was time for the students to make an introduction. Mayor Wallace asked the students to come forward.

The students of Inspiring Minds introduced themselves and stated what occupations they desired.



Mayor Wallace thanked Ms. Simpson for her contributions to the youth of Hampton and Council distributed lapel pins to each of the students present. Mayor Wallace then called for the regular Public Comment session to begin.

Ms. Joan Charles, 101 Madrid Drive, approached the dais and made the following statement: That's a hard act to follow. I almost hate to do this, but I'm going to do it anyway. On January 8th, 2014 at the 6:00 p.m. Public Comments in Council Chambers the protocol was read. It stated Council will not engage in conversations with the public. That is fine. Not exactly citizen engagement, but rules are rules. At the end of the 28-minute session, our Mayor proceeded to make a statement. I quote him verbatim. "Just for the record, in case there is someone viewing our Council meeting for the first time on TV, or in a hotel, or someone who wishes to make an investment, if you hear these disclosures or these discourses by individuals making these charges and accusations, you would think we are going to the devil in a hand basket. I want to assure you that is not accurate. The statements here are pleat with inaccuracies and misinformations." Unless the Mayor is a tailor, the word "pleat," which is a fold of fabric, should have been replete. With less than 170 words, and with one broad stroke, our Mayor proclaimed every speaker that evening as either liars or idiots. The walls of City Hall are covered with certificates proclaiming citizen engagement in Hampton. There is even an international award. And we are so engaged that only 20% of the citizens bother to vote. We are so engaged, that Council only fully meets once a month. We are so engaged that Council decides appointments behind closed doors. We are so engaged that our Neighborhood Commissioners, who were originally elected by the residents, are now appointed. Where is all the true citizen engagement gone to? So at this particular juncture, I would like to say that the Mayor's comments were out of context with the spirit of citizen engagement.

Mr. Eddie Deerfield, 1515 Garrow Circle, approached the dais and made the following statement: I'm here tonight because I had a problem yesterday on my street. Actually, it happened last Thursday. I sent an email to Council and Ms. Bunting and I wanted to thank you because the problem was alleviated within two hours. The gentleman, Kevin, and I do want to mention his name, he's the gentleman who came out, he's the supervisor, I believe. He cleaned the place up, and he not only cleaned it up, he turned around and put the trash barrels back in people's yards. I really wanted to thank you for the response I got, and as you all know me, when something's done right, you've got to get praise for it. I've got another problem. On that one, I sent you all another email with some pictures. I've got the rest of the pictures in here of the curbs and gutters and the way our street is starting to crack and get in real bad shape. Our curbs and gutters are in bad shape. They're broke, the dirt's coming out from in the yard. If you look at some of them, there's dirt coming up from where the gutter is supposed to be. These need to be fixed. You all made us a flood area, and we should be entitled to have good curbs and gutters, and good streets, because we only have one storm drain at the end of the cul-de-sac. I live in the area where there are four cul-de-sacs at a dead-end area. We don't ever see anybody but the garbage men and the trash person who comes around in a big yellow truck. Maybe once in a while you might see a City truck running through there. It seems that Seward Drive is the cutoff for our area. Truthfully speaking, we feel like bastard children over there. So, I'm asking you all if you can, again, help us out and see if you can do something with the curbs and gutters and the street. The blacktop on the street, I think, was done about ten years ago, and all they did was they put a coat of black over the road. They didn't actually put blacktop down. This is, if you look at the pictures, I've got all of them here, you've got some of the pictures I've sent you, the



cracks are coming out and where they came out and the Waterworks company turned around and made rectangular shapes to put new meters in, it's actually cracked all the way around the places that they're working. I'm afraid that's going to sink. So, I'm just asking for your help on that. But I really appreciate you all taking care of this yesterday, I really do. Thank you.

Mr. David Dietrich, 139 Wilderness Road, was called to speak but was no longer in attendance.

Ms. Elizabeth McCoury, Executive Director of Coliseum Central, 4410 E. Claiborne Square, Ste. 211, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I'm so excited to be here tonight. I just left a meeting at Embassy Suites with the promoter for a brand new event that's going to be at the Hampton Coliseum on March 29th and 30th. It's the Virginia Hot Rod and Custom Car Show. We had some of our hoteliers there, they're selling lots of rooms, so we'll have heads on beds and people eating in restaurants and enjoying the City of Hampton. I just wanted to share that with you all. You know, we really work hard in Coliseum Central to have wonderful, family oriented events for such special young people, and I hope that they didn't pick up a bad word tonight. But anyway, thank you for all that you do. If there's anything Coliseum Central can do to help you, please let us know.

Ms. Marjorie Hunter, 1300 Thomas Street, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I want to speak on behalf of Inspiring Minds. My sons have been going there for about eight years. My oldest son will be nine this year. I just want to thank Mrs. Simpson and the staff at Inspiring Minds for keeping my children, keeping them educated. Today, they did have the ceremony at Tucker Capps and I witnessed all the children that attend Tucker Capps now getting awards today, and three additional ones that attended prior to getting awards today, all for Honor Roll and Good Citizenship.

Ms. Sandra Canapa, 3 Markham Drive, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I completely agree with Ms. Charles's earlier remarks that on January the 8th, Mayor Wallace, in so many words, insulted all citizens who spoke that evening so honestly, sincerely, and accurately during Council's Public Comment period. His comments were grammatically incorrect, misleading, wrong and an embarrassment to this City. Additionally, as far as his comment that night, as to who he believes is going to the devil in a hand basket, Mayor Wallace would've been far more accurate if he had clarified it is Hampton leadership that for years has been going to the devil in a hand basket, and not Hampton residents. Thank you.

Mr. Edwin Boone, 48 Snow Street, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I was born and raised here and looking at the Inspiring Minds, I could've been one of them. They're born and raised here. I'm 59 years old, so I'm telling you, what's most inspiring when you learn something and stand up for your rights and speak truth to power. There are seven seats on City Council. Five seats are available. There's two left. Five from seven is two. When the Mayor was here, the six went lockstep with the Mayor. There was always one that was for the people. We have to keep that one, because it's always six against one that's voting against, in my opinion, the citizens' interests. In two votes for the courthouse was \$30 million. Harbor Square, \$13 million. That's \$43 million that the Inspiring Minds have to pay for 30 years, or when they turn 18, for 22 years. So we have to get out and vote, people. You take that one that we need to keep, that was

always voted against, and he's still by the people, we have to get three seats to make it four to have the majority vote. That's the only way, since they've proven themselves, how they work in lockstep, and they work together, either behind closed doors to get a consensus and/or they come and vote against the people's will. A lot of interest that's been done as far as the Peninsula Town Center, that went bankrupt in 22 months. The bank bought it back for \$50 million. Buckroe, we had petitions that the citizens signed, but since we don't have representation, there's always the majority vote, we have to get our majority vote for the people. We keep that one person that's always been voted against and the citizens need to put in three to have our majority vote. Otherwise, it's business as usual. One in particular, the Mayor, he may be running uncontested. So I want to know, from his potential cosigners and ones who sponsor him, how do you feel when I ask the Mayor about Hampton being the murder capital of the Tidewater area and he laughed, when our citizens, our kids, are being murdered in the streets. Also want to know, leadership, preachers, political people, how do you feel when I ask the Mayor about getting kicked off the Fort Monroe Board and isn't there at least one minority to replace him when Hampton is 51% minority, and asked him at least one minority could replace him, and he said no. Thank you.

Ms. Jessica Klemenlic, 243 New Castle Court, approached the dais and made the following statement: I'm here on behalf of Inspiring Minds. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Michelle Simpson and her staff for their dedication to our children's wellbeing and for providing them with the foundation to become the bright stars of our future. Inspiring Minds is not a day care. It is an educational institution that uses Christian values to help build each child's individual character. Every parent initially worries or may have reservations about sending their kids off to day care for the first time, but I knew my Miles and Ella were in good hands after our tour of the facility. Both kids started at Inspiring Minds when they were two years old. Ella is now seven years old and a first grader at Tucker Capps, and Miles is five, attending preschool at Inspiring Minds. It is amazing to see the progress they have made in learning to read and write. The curriculum is based on A Beka and focuses on language development, handwriting, numbers and math concepts, arts and crafts, and arts appreciation. In addition, they are learning about involvement in the community and participate in the readers and leaders program. Summer camp is also always a blast, and parents are encouraged to participate. Also, we do have the tight-knit parental community; everyone supports each other. All these reasons, I joke with Michelle that she cannot retire until Miles reaches ninth grade. It is a true blessing to have Inspiring Minds in our family and our lives. Thank you.

Ms. Karen Thomas, 2911 Wickham Avenue, Newport News, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: My daughter, she attends Inspiring Minds. I'm a little different than the other parents because we travel from Newport News, we live in Newport News and she goes to Deer Park Elementary. I find it very important as a wonderful start for her to get there after school every day, before, sometimes, the other kids from Hampton City Schools get there. We're there before time, maybe on time sometimes. It's been a wonderful program. She's only been attending it for about five months maybe, and it's just been a great start for her. So I just want to thank Ms. Simpson and you guys for letting them come in and getting their little award and everything like that. I'd just like to say thank you.

Mr. Chauncey Brown, 367 Lasalle Avenue, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I usually try to celebrate this month of February that's designated as



African American History month by bringing you a story of local African American history. This year, I'm going to defer the story. I've got stories, plenty of stories. We have so much history here in Hampton and that's kind of what I wanted to speak about, is that the history that we have here, the African American history especially, and I don't look at it as something separate from the general history, but as we discover more of the African American history and infuse it into the general history we then put ourselves in a better position to make Hampton that destination that we're saying that we want Hampton to become. Right now, it's kind of like a number of unconnected dots. So I think that our efforts should be toward connecting those dots in such a way that they attract more people to organized tours and those kinds of things. I hope that we don't lose the great asset that we have at Fort Monroe. I think that we should go forward with the support for the monument, but also support for a gathering space there because, what better place to put a research facility where folks can come and research their family history than Fort Monroe? I want to just share that for July 4th week of last year, I had the opportunity to go to Charleston, South Carolina and a day trip over to Savannah and one of the things that I experienced there was the great hospitality that they showed and that everyone seemed to be on the same sheet of music, whether it was one of the servers in the restaurants or one of the citizens in the street. My host, the very first thing he did was to let me know that Charleston had been noted by one of the travel magazine as the #1 destination. The hospitality of everyone was just great there. One thing I noticed, too, and this is a personal plug here, is that the hospitality to each other seemed to be great. I did not see one "No Fishing" sign anywhere while I was down there. Everywhere in Hampton where there's access to the waters, where I as a resident used to go and be able to fish, there's a "No Fishing" sign. So I think we need to start practicing that hospitality to each other. I'm not a lawyer, but I think we could make some kind of case regarding, I'm an ex-realtor, regarding the rights of citizens to public space that abuts the water. It's an antiquated law called Riparian Rights. I think that would be a good step toward us making this area a destination and to also work toward getting everybody on the same sheet of music, and, those of us that work at this area every day, to help us be able to do that more by, maybe even better compensation for the work that you do in trying to make Hampton a destination. The stories, I still have them, I'll be back with the story, but I just wanted to defer to that for this occasion. Thank you.

## ADJOURNMENT

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George E. Wallace  
Mayor

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Katherine K. Glass, CMC  
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council \_\_\_\_\_